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**ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY WILLIAM S. WONG AND
FBI SPECIAL AGENT GERALD W. WILSON, JR. RECEIVE
RECOGNITION FROM HEADQUARTERS**

SACRAMENTO—The Department of Justice held its 21st annual Executive Office for United States Attorneys Director's Awards Ceremony today in which 224 award recipients received recognition for their excellence in law enforcement. Recipients include Assistant United States Attorneys, litigation and information technology support personnel, as well as others who have made outstanding contributions in federal, state, and local law enforcement.

United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott and Sacramento FBI Special Agent In Charge (SAC) Keith Slotter announced today that Assistant United States Attorney WILLIAM S. WONG, and FBI Special Agent GERALD W. WILSON, JR. have been recognized for their work in the investigation and prosecution of the Romper Room Gang. Between late-1994 and mid-1996, approximately 35-40 banks/credit unions in Northern California were victims of violent take-over robberies targeting the vault of each financial institution. In February of 1997 the Vallejo Violent Suppression Task Force was organized to investigate these crimes. The investigation was successful in identifying the Romper Room Gang as being responsible for the robberies.

Assistant United States Attorney William S. Wong was the prosecutor in the long-term, aggressive investigation and prosecution of the Romper Room Gang. Assistant United States Attorney Wong's tenacity, despite threats to his personal safety, resulted in the prosecution and conviction of 30 individuals, including 14 in the Eastern District of California between 1998–2002. Assistant United States Attorney Wong personally prosecuted the majority of the more than 30 Romper Room Gang members for a conspiracy to commit bank/credit union robberies, and the use of firearms in the commission of those robberies. Furthermore, as a result of Assistant United States Attorney Wong's role on the Task Force, he was able to coordinate and develop prosecutable cases for other prosecuting agencies, both local and federal

Special Agent Gerald W. Wilson, Jr. was the lead case agent in the investigation and prosecution of the Romper Room Gang. His leadership and organizational skills fostered complete cooperation between local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies on the Task Force. Special Agent Wilson was instrumental in developing prosecutable cases against 30 members of the Romper Room Gang which resulted in the conviction of all 30. Special Agent

Wilson also assisted the prosecutor in the jury trial of the leader of the violent street gang which resulted in the dismantling of the gang.

"I commend all of the award recipients for their extraordinary accomplishments," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "You have made a difference that has expanded the freedom of the American people-giving them freedom from terrorism, freedom from crime, freedom from the dependency of drugs, and freedom from dishonesty and deception in our financial markets. Your work, your lives, and your actions have changed lives for the better, ensuring that every American is equal under the law and protected by the United States Constitution."

"These awards recognize the impressive achievements of 224 of the nation's finest public servants," said Mary Beth Buchanan, Director of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys at the Department of Justice. "They are the prosecutors, secretaries, paralegals, IT specialists, officers, agents, and others whose hard work makes our nation safer and our system of justice stronger."

"Targeting violent crime is a high priority for this office. Veteran prosecutor William Wong's tenacity and skill struck a very real blow against organized gang activity in the region," added United States Attorney Scott.

"Jerry Wilson's outstanding work ethic and his compassion in dealing with victims of violent crimes epitomizes what the public expects from federal law enforcement officers. Our office is proud to have him among our ranks," said SAC Slotter.

Working together, the nation's law enforcement and justice community have:

- Driven the violent crime rate to its lowest level in 30 years;
- Increased gun-crime prosecutions by 68 percent in just three years-and as a consequence, over the past three years the number of gun crimes has decreased by more than 250,000;
- Charged more than 900 violators in more than 400 cases since the inception of the Corporate Fraud Task Force. To date, more than 500 individuals have been convicted, including the prosecution of top executives whom have been shown do not stand above the law;
- Dismantled 14 major drug-trafficking networks and seriously disrupted eight more over the past two years alone;
- Stopped human trafficking. In the fiscal years of 2001 to 2003, 210 new human-trafficking investigations were opened. That is double the number of the previous three years;
- Charged 439 individuals for criminal civil rights violations over the past three fiscal years. This is more than were charged during the preceding three years; and
- Obtained the single largest civil penalty in history against a single company for violations of an environmental statute. Through tough enforcement of the Clean Air Act, a reduction in air pollution of over 465,000 tons per year has been achieved. And courts

imposed more than \$179 million in civil penalties for violations in environmental cases, second only to fiscal year 2003 's record-setting recovery of \$203 million.

The Executive Office for United States Attorneys provides oversight, general executive assistance and direction to the 94 United States Attorneys' Offices around the country.

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